

CONFIDENTIAL

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1963

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Handling of Death Cases - Prior Marriages

1. On one occasion we had to deal with a widow who was unaware that her husband had been previously married. In another case, while the wife was aware that her husband had had a prior marriage, they had decided not to reveal this fact to their children, the oldest one being twenty-six at the time of his death. When we discuss these facts with the family, especially with the children present, we can cause severe emotional upsets.

2. Unless we know positively that the wife or husband is aware of prior marriages and that the children, if any, are likewise knowledgeable of such fact it will be preferable to prepare FEGLI, retirement applications, or other documents with information on prior marriages omitted. This will enable the officer dealing with the wife or husband to develop this fact with them. Chances are in reviewing the forms with the survivor the fact of prior marriage will come out very naturally. If necessary we should take the wife or husband aside, under one pretext or another, to make certain that she or he is aware of prior marriage. In any case, we will have the opportunity to save embarrassment to children and be able to leave it to the wife or husband to acquaint them with the facts if they so desire. After we return to the office we can perfect the documents before submitting them as required.



Chief, Benefits and Services Division

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